

Application No. 10/750,381
Amendment dated March 7, 2008
Reply to Final Office Action dated October 18, 2007

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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) An absorbent garment comprising a garment shell and an inner absorbent assembly,

wherein the garment shell comprises a front panel assembly defining a front waist region, and a back panel assembly defining a back waist region, the front panel assembly being connected to the back panel assembly so as to define a waist opening and at least one leg opening, the garment shell further comprising an elasticized shell waistband, the elasticized shell waistband adapted to encircle the wearer, the garment shell defining a body-side surface and an outward surface;

wherein the inner absorbent assembly comprises:

an absorbent pad, the absorbent pad defining a front region and a back region;

an elasticized support waistband defining a front waist section and a back waist section, the front waist section being connected to the absorbent pad front region; and

at least one posterior support strap connecting the elasticized support waistband to the absorbent pad;

wherein the elasticized support waistband is connected to the body-side surface of the garment shell, and wherein the absorbent pad is located entirely within approximately a front half of the garment.

2. (Original) The absorbent garment of claim 1, wherein the elasticized shell waistband defines a shell waistband edge, and the elasticized support waistband defines a support waistband edge, and the shell waistband edge and the support waistband edge are coterminous.
3. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 1, wherein the elasticized shell waistband defines a shell waistband edge, and the elasticized support waistband defines a support waistband edge, and the support waistband edge and the shell waistband edge are positioned with respect to each other such that the shell waistband edge would be positioned higher on a wearer's waist than would the support waistband edge.

Application No. 10/750,381

Amendment dated March 7, 2008

Reply to Final Office Action dated October 18, 2007

4. (Previously presented) The absorbent garment of claim 1, wherein the at least one posterior support strap is narrower in width than the absorbent pad.
5. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 1, wherein the width of the posterior strap increases from the absorbent composite to the elasticized support waistband.
6. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 1, wherein the absorbent assembly includes two posterior support straps which connect the elasticized support waistband to the absorbent composite.
7. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 6, wherein the two posterior support straps diverge from each other from the absorbent composite to the elasticized support waistband.
8. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 7, wherein the two posterior support straps are connected to the back region of the absorbent composite.
9. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 1, wherein the elasticized support waistband is connected to the body-side surface of the garment shell at the front waist region of the garment shell.
10. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 1, wherein the elasticized support waistband is connected to the body-side surface of the garment shell at both the front waist region and the back waist region of the garment shell.
11. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 1, wherein the elasticized support waistband is releasably connected to the body-side surface of the garment shell.
12. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 1, wherein the elasticized support waistband is refastenably connected to the body-side surface of the garment shell.
13. (Previously presented) The absorbent garment of claim 1, further comprising at least one anterior support strap connecting the elasticized support waistband to the absorbent pad.

Application No. 10/750,381

Amendment dated March 7, 2008

Reply to Final Office Action dated October 18, 2007

14. (Previously presented) The absorbent garment of claim 13, wherein the anterior support strap is connected to the front region of the absorbent pad.
15. (Original) The absorbent garment of claim 1, wherein the at least one posterior support strap is elastomeric.
16. (Original) The absorbent garment of claim 1, wherein the garment also includes a crotch region interconnecting the front and back panels to define two leg openings.
17. (Previously presented) The absorbent garment of claim 1, wherein the absorbent pad back region defines a back end and the absorbent pad front region defines a front end, and wherein the absorbent pad further defines two side edges, each side edge extending between the front and back end, and wherein the two side edges, the front end, and the back end are urged upward generally toward the wearer to define an upwardly urged periphery of the absorbent pad.
18. (Previously presented) The absorbent garment of claim 17, wherein the upwardly urged periphery of the absorbent pad comprises absorbent material which provides at least about 20% of an absorbent capacity of the absorbent pad.

Application No. 10/750,381

Amendment dated March 7, 2008

Reply to Final Office Action dated October 18, 2007

19. (Withdrawn) An absorbent garment comprising a garment shell and an inner absorbent assembly,
- wherein the garment shell comprises a front panel assembly defining a front waist region, and a back panel assembly defining a back waist region, the front panel assembly being connected to the back panel assembly so as to define a waist opening and at least one leg opening, the garment shell further comprising an elasticized shell waistband, the elasticized shell waistband adapted to encircle the wearer, the garment shell defining a body-side surface and an outward surface;
- wherein the inner absorbent assembly comprises:
- an absorbent composite, the absorbent composite defining a front region and a back region, the front region being connected to the front waist region of the garment shell;
- two posterior support straps which connect the absorbent composite to at least one of the front waist region and the back waist region of the garment shell, the two posterior support straps diverging from each other from the absorbent composite to the at least one of the front waist region and the back waist region.
20. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 19, wherein the two posterior support straps are releaseably connected to the garment shell.
21. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 19, wherein the two posterior support straps each include a frangible line of weakness to allow disconnection of the absorbent composite from the garment shell.
22. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 19, wherein the absorbent composite front region is releaseably connected to the front waist region of the garment shell.
23. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 19, further comprising at least one anterior support strap connecting the absorbent composite front region to the front waist region of the garment shell.
24. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 23, wherein the at least one anterior support strap is releaseably connected to the front waist region of the garment shell.

Application No. 10/750,381

Amendment dated March 7, 2008

Reply to Final Office Action dated October 18, 2007

25. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 23, wherein the at least one anterior support strap includes a frangible line of weakness to allow disconnection of the absorbent composite from the front waist region of the garment shell.
26. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 19, wherein the garment also includes a crotch region interconnecting the front and back panel assemblies to define two leg openings.
27. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 19, wherein the absorbent composite back region defines a back end and the absorbent composite front region defines a front end, and wherein the absorbent composite further defines two side edges, each side edge extending between the front and back end, and wherein the two side edges, the front end, and the back end are urged upward generally toward the wearer to define an upwardly urged periphery of the absorbent composite.
28. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 9, wherein the upwardly urged periphery of the absorbent composite comprises absorbent material which provides at least about 20% of an absorbent capacity of the absorbent composite.

Application No. 10/750,381
Amendment dated March 7, 2008
Reply to Final Office Action dated October 18, 2007

29. (Withdrawn) An absorbent garment comprising a garment shell and an inner absorbent assembly,

wherein the garment shell comprises a front panel assembly defining a front waist region, and a back panel assembly defining a back waist region, the front panel assembly being connected to the back panel assembly so as to define a waist opening and at least one leg opening, the garment shell further comprising an elasticized shell waistband, the elasticized shell waistband adapted to encircle the wearer, the garment shell defining a body-side surface and an outward surface;

wherein the inner absorbent assembly comprises:

an absorbent composite, the absorbent composite defining a front region and a back region, the front region being connected to the front waist region of the garment shell; and

two posterior support straps which connect the front region of the absorbent composite to the back region of the absorbent composite, the two posterior support straps diverging from each other from the absorbent composite back region to the absorbent composite front region.

30. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 1, further comprising an elasticized support waistband defining a front waist section and a back waist section, wherein the front waist section is connected to the absorbent composite front region, and wherein the elasticized support waistband is connected to the body-side surface of the garment shell.

Application No. 10/750,381

Amendment dated March 7, 2008

Reply to Final Office Action dated October 18, 2007

31. (Currently amended) An absorbent garment comprising a garment shell and an inner absorbent assembly,
- wherein the garment shell comprises a front panel assembly defining a front waist region, a back panel assembly defining a back waist region, and a crotch region extending longitudinally between and interconnecting the front waist region and the back waist region, the front panel assembly being connected to the back panel assembly so as to define a waist opening and at least one leg opening, the garment shell further comprising an elasticized shell waistband, the elasticized shell waistband adapted to encircle the wearer, the garment shell defining a body-side surface and an outward surface;
- wherein the inner absorbent assembly comprises:
- an absorbent pad, the absorbent pad defining a front region and a back region, the front region being connected to the front waist region of the garment shell, and the back region terminating in the crotch region of the garment shell, wherein the absorbent pad is located entirely within approximately a front half of the garment; and
- at least one posterior support strap which connects the back region of the absorbent pad to the back waist region of the garment shell while remaining free of attachment to the crotch region of the garment shell.
32. (Previously presented) The absorbent garment of claim 31, wherein the at least one posterior support strap is narrower in width than the absorbent pad.
33. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 31, wherein the width of the at least one posterior strap increases from the absorbent composite to the back waist region of the garment shell.
34. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 31, wherein the absorbent assembly is releasably connected to the body-side surface of the garment shell.
35. (Withdrawn) The absorbent garment of claim 31, wherein the absorbent assembly is refastenably connected to the body-side surface of the garment shell.
36. (Previously presented) The absorbent garment of claim 31, further comprising at least one anterior support strap connecting the garment shell to the absorbent pad.

Application No. 10/750,381
Amendment dated March 7, 2008
Reply to Final Office Action dated October 18, 2007

37. (Original) The absorbent garment of claim 31, wherein the at least one posterior support strap is elastomeric.
38. (Withdrawn) A package comprising at least one garment shell and a plurality of inner absorbent assemblies,
the at least one garment shell comprising a front panel assembly defining a front waist region, and a back panel assembly defining a back waist region, the front panel assembly being connected to the back panel assembly so as to define a waist opening and at least one leg opening, the garment shell further comprising an elasticized shell waistband, the elasticized shell waistband adapted to encircle the wearer, the garment shell defining a body-side surface and an outward surface;
each inner absorbent assembly comprising:
an absorbent composite, the absorbent composite defining a front region and a back region;
an elasticized support waistband defining a front waist section and a back waist section, the front waist section being connected to the absorbent composite front region; and
at least one posterior support strap connecting the elasticized support waistband to the absorbent composite.
39. (Withdrawn) The package of claim 38, wherein each absorbent assembly includes two posterior support straps which connect the elasticized support waistband to the absorbent composite.
40. (Withdrawn) The package of claim 39, wherein the two posterior support straps diverge from each other from the absorbent composite to the elasticized support waistband.
41. (Withdrawn) The package of claim 38, wherein the elasticized support waistband of each absorbent assembly is adapted to engage the body-side surface of the at least one garment shell at the front waist region thereof.
42. (Previously presented) The absorbent garment of claim 31, wherein the garment also includes a crotch region interconnecting the front and back panels to define two leg openings.